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REUTER'S TELEGRAMS.

THE ITALIAN SITUATION.

Graphic Picture of Retreat

London, November 3.
Reuter's correspondent at Italian Headquarters gives a graphic picture of the retreat. He says that Staff Headquarters worked all night long on October 28 packing documents, destroying correspondence and tearing down maps from the walls. The exodus of the population, alarmed at the reports of fugitives of the enemy, began on the previous day. People of all classes poured into the road in the direction of Treviso. Some were in motor cars, others in carts drawn by oxen, donkeys and mules. Handcarts, pushed by the owners, were piled with baggage. Women were carrying babies, others were weeping, and children were lost in the confusion. Wounded, aged and sick were carried in the arms of their relations. It was strange to see occasionally men and women in evening dress hurrying through the mud, all jammed among a mass of infantry and artillery men plodding wearily among an interminable procession of lorries, ambulance tractors and gun carriages. These very often fell into the ditches, and had to be dragged out by oxen or abandoned. A heavy rain came on, adding to the misery of the scene. As the crowd increased civilians streamed into the fields on either side, such was the jam of pedestrians. Progress was quicker in motors, but it took the correspondent and his colleagues six hours to cover six miles. When they reached Pordenone they found nothing to eat and had nowhere to sleep.

Austrian Weight of Numbers.

London, November 3.
Reuter's correspondent at Italian Headquarters states that he was the last to leave Udine, which was evacuated on October 27, the Austro-Germans having taken Caporetto and Plesno, on the right bank of the northern portion of the Isonzo, and about the cross at Santa Lucia and Santa Maria, south-west of Tolmino. The Military Headquarters were stripped bare before the departure. Information from the battle zone told how the Austrians, through sheer weight of numbers forced the Italians, who were outnumbered in men by twenty to one, and in guns ten to one. General Gonsa reached Udine, he having been wounded eleven times. All the Staff were casualties, and only three of his escort out of fifty were alive. General Beresqieri fought most stubbornly without any idea of surrender. Of the three regiments only one officer was alive, and he was wounded.

Peace Offer to Italy Practically Certain.

London, November 3.
The Times correspondent at Rome states that it is practically certain that a peace offer to Italy is a matter of weeks, if not days. Italy did not request help.

London, November 3.
Mr. Macpherson, in a written reply to Major Laneford, says: "No doubt was expressed by General Cadorna or the Italian Government to the British General Staff, of their inability to meet the attack, which they knew was about to be made on them. No request from Italy for help to meet the attack was made before it took place."

A Well-Ordered Retreat.

London, November 3.
Mr. Ward Price, the war correspondent at Italian Headquarters, states that confusion is inevitable in a retreat of a million men from positions they had held over two years on a front of forty miles, down steep twisting roads, across several rivers to the Tagliamento, where there were only three bridges, and on which the vast masses of men and material had to converge. The General Staff had reckoned on a month to withdraw the Army under normal conditions, but they had to do it in three days. The principal Italian line of defence on the Isonzo was the so-called Plec line and was breaking. The line, owing to want of resistance, still unexplained, enabled the enemy to capture the whole valley between Plesno and Tolmino, to cut off and surround Montebello and other mountain positions, and secure easy roads leading to the plain. Had General Cadorna delayed an hour from ordering the retirement of the Third Army from Carso on the collapse of the Second Army, the Third Army would have been captured. It was eleven o'clock at night when the Infantry of the Third Army left the trenches with such good heart, that, failing transport, the men hauled the guns with ropes thirty miles to the Tagliamento. Some heavy guns had to be abandoned but were first destroyed.

Italian Troops Cheered.

London, November 3.
The Daily Telegraph correspondent at Milan, describing the patriotic stirring up of the people as the extent of the disaster becomes known, mentions that the troops are cheered as they pass. Austro-Germans Not Likely to Cross the Tagliamento.

London, November 3.
A telegram from Rome states that it is not likely that the Austro-Germans will attempt to cross the Tagliamento, where they would be confronted with the bulk of the Italian Army which is burning to assume the offensive in co-operation with the Allies. It is surmised that the enemy may fortify themselves in the occupied area. The presence of Anglo-French troops on the Italian front is considered to be exceptionally important as it is achieving a unity of front on an unbroken line from the North Sea to the Adriatic, depriving the Austro-Germans of the advantage of attacking the Allies separately. Enemy Pressure Heavier on Left Wing.

London, November 3.
An Italian official message states: "Enemy pressure is heavier on the left wing of the Tagliamento line. We detained attempts to reach the right bank of the river."

A Dangerous Illusion.

London, November 3.
Reuter's correspondent at Rome states that there is necessity to speak plainly, almost brutally of the Italian situation. Everywhere it is emphasised that the plan of the enemy must fail, but it is dangerous illusion to think he has already failed. Formidable battle must be fought. The Italian plans of the reconquest of Beolow require great patience, and military endurance which are essential if it is necessary to retreat further.

Capture of Italian Prisoners.

London, November 3.
A German wireless official message states: "Italian prisoners now number 200,000 and 1,800 guns."

REUTER'S TELEGRAMS.

THE WESTERN FRONT.

Hostile Artillery Fighting.

London, November 3.
Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, in a communique, states: "We have taken a few prisoners. There was a patrol encounter west of La Bassée. There was great hostile artillery firing during the night east of Ypres."

The German Evacuation.

London, November 3.
According to Reuter's correspondent at Paris, a semi-official message states that the enemy's evacuation of Chemin des Dames the French lines, and have taken up positions in the marshy region of the Ailette which the French dominate. Moreover any serious enemy attempt to adopt the offensive on the Aisne front will from now on be out of the question, while the defence of our position in this region has become easier and will require the fewest men, German Claim.

London, November 3.
A German wireless official message states: "We are reconnoitring and have taken prisoner North Americans on the Rhine-Marne Canal."

The French Advance.

London, November 3.
A French communique states: "During the night we continued the advance between the Oise Canal and the region of Corvany, and reached the southern bank of the Ailette, along the entire front. The enemy fell back on the northern front to bridges, the passages to which have been cut. The artillery struggle continued to be lively in the sector of Chavignon and at some points in the region of the plateaux. Among the material captured since October 23 we have already captured two hundred heavy and field guns, 220 trench guns, and 720 machine guns."

Right of the Meuse there are violent artillery actions on the Chaulnes Wood front. Between October 21 and 31 twenty-one enemy aeroplanes were brought down by pilots, and two by aircraft guns. Moreover, twenty-eight enemy machines were seriously damaged and were brought down in their own lines.

ENEMY DEFEATED ON BELGIAN COAST.

London, November 3.
An Admiralty announcement states: "An electrically controlled high-speed boat attacked our patrols on the Belgian Coast to-day. The attack was defeated and the boat destroyed."

RUSSIAN SOLDIERS FRATERNISE.

London, November 3.
A Russian wireless official message states: "Our soldiers fraternised with the enemy at Vishnoffka sector. We successfully raided to the north of Husiatyn and took some prisoners."

NAVAL ENCOUNTER.

German War Vessels Sunk.

London, November 3.
An Admiralty announcement states: "Our forces, operating in the Kattegat, destroyed an auxiliary cruiser armed with six-inch guns, and also ten armed patrols. Sixty-four prisoners were rescued. We had no casualties."

Prisoners being Brought In.

London, November 3.
The Admiralty announces: "Our Naval Forces operating in the Kattegat have apparently been engaged with enemy forces, probably patrols. Official information only intimates that certain of our vessels have been detached to bring in prisoners, and are nearing their bases."

A Short Fight.

London, November 3.
Reuter's correspondent at Copenhagen says it is stated that the German auxiliary cruiser, which was sunk, is the Maria, of Port Flensburg. She was four-thousand tons, and carried a crew of eighty-one. The fight lasted only fifteen minutes. Wounded at Copenhagen.

London, November 3.
Reuter's correspondent at Copenhagen states that a steamer has arrived with the wounded on board from the German auxiliary cruiser which was sunk in the North Sea.

RETURNED TO FRANCE.

London, November 3.
The Press Bureau announces that M. Painlevé and General Petain have returned to France after a brief visit to England.

THE KERENSKY INTERVIEW.

Russia Worn Out.

London, November 3.
Reuter's correspondent at New York, giving further details of the interview which took place with M. Kerensky, says that M. Kerensky said: "That is a ridiculous question. The Russians are taking an enormous part in the war. She was already fighting while England bore the brunt of the fighting, thereby saving England and France. We are now worn out and are entitled to claim that the Allies shall take the heaviest burden." M. Kerensky emphasised the need of America sending Russia boots, leather, iron, but more especially money.

Mr. Lansing's Statement.

Reuter's correspondent at Washington states that Mr. Lansing, in his statement on the M. Kerensky interview, adds that their own advice show that the Provisional Government at Petrograd is attacking with great energy the problems confronting it. M. Kerensky and his Government are far from yielding to discouragement. They are still animated by a strong determination to organise all Russia's resources, and a whole-hearted determination to carry on the war to a victorious conclusion. At the same time the United States, and also the Allies, were rendering all possible assistance.

REUTER'S TELEGRAMS.

MR. BEN TILLET'S RETURN.

London, November 3.
Mr. Ben Tillett's return is surprising as the Coalition campaign was better organised and the views of both as regards the vigorous prosecution of the war are practically identical. Mr. Tillett, however, who is supported by the Trades Unionists, announced his intention of making war on profiteers. He urged a further increase in pay to soldiers and sailors. Speaking after the poll Mr. Tillett said the result showed that the country wanted a more strenuous Parliamentary representation to give confidence to the Army and Navy.

IRISHMEN SENT TO PRISON.

London, November 3.
A Court Martial at Cork has sentenced two civilians to six months' imprisonment for wearing a military uniform, another to nine months for the same offence and also for carrying a bayonet, and another to a year for military drilling. The Commander-in-Chief has remitted parts of the sentences in two cases.

PARCEL MAILS LOST.

The Post Office announces the loss, through enemy action, of parcel mails, containing in most cases about a fortnight's postings. The dates are as follows:—Shanghai August 28, Hongkong August 31, Singapore September 10, Penang September 13, Colombo September 22, Basra September 15, Calcutta September 22, Karachi September 23, Madras September 25, Bombay September 27, Aden October 5, and Port Said October 11. No letter mails have been lost.

THE POPE AS A TOOL FOR PEACE.

London, November 3.
The Times states that the appointment of Count Hertling as a tool for her peace manoeuvres.

GAOL FOR GERMANS IN AMERICA.

London, November 3.
According to Reuter's correspondent at New York, August Friedrich, leader of the Socialist conspiracy to obstruct the Draft for the Army, has been sentenced, at Sioux Falls, to five years' imprisonment and a fine of a thousand dollars. Twenty-six other Germans were sentenced from one to two years, imprisonment in addition to fines.

NEW SPANISH CABINET.

London, November 3.
Reuter's correspondent at Madrid states that a new Cabinet has been formed under the Premiership of Signor Garcia Prieto.

SUCCESS IN EGYPT.

London, November 3.
An Egypt official message states: "After a heavy bombardment we attacked on Thursday night the western and south-western defence of Gaza. We captured the Turkish first line on a front of five-thousand yards and took 285 prisoners. We drove off three counter-attacks inflicting heavy losses."

EARLIER TELEGRAMS.

THE WESTERN FRONT.

Reciprocal Artillery Activity.

London, November 2.
Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig reports: "Hostile artillery was more active in the neighbourhood of the Ypres-Staden railway. Our artillery activity on the battle-front has continued. A pilot flew through clouds at a height of only 200 feet and dropped two heavy bombs on the Gontrode aerodrome on Thursday. A drizzle and heavy anti-aircraft fire prevented observation of the results being taken."

French Pressing Enemy.

Paris, November 2.
A communique states: "The results of our victory at Malmélay have not been slow in showing. Threatened on his right, pressed by our infantry, and crushed by our artillery, which have unceasingly bombarded his organisations south of Ailette from our new positions, the enemy has been compelled to abandon Chemin-des-Dames, to which he has been clinging for the past six months. On a front of twenty kilometres, from Froidmont Farm to a point east of Oronne, our troops, descending the northern slopes of Chemin-des-Dames, occupied the German positions to a depth exceeding one kilometre at certain places. The villages of Courtecon, Cerny-en-Laonnois, Ailles and Chevreux are in our hands. Patrols, keeping contact with the enemy, reached Ailette, between Braye-en-Laonnois and Cerny."

THE ITALIAN SITUATION.

Position Not Desperate.

London, November 2.
Reuter's Agency authoritatively learns that the Italian situation, while exceedingly grave, is by no means desperate. The Italians, who were outnumbered and outgunned, had to fall back on a line at the Tagliamento, and the possibility of confidence. On the contrary, it is evident that the Italians are playing for time. The best brains of the Allies are now focussed upon the Italian front. It is possible that here one of the biggest battles in history may be fought. Powers are crashing blow in the open, the first condition of which being that the Italian Army remains intact. At present the Italian Armies are unbroken and undaunted.

SUPERSTITIONS IN CHINA.

Interesting Lecture at Shanghai.

On October 25 Mrs. F. Ayscough read a paper before the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society on "Casual notes on Chinese popular superstition."

Mrs. Ayscough described superstition as in reality extreme credulity in regard to the agency of superior beings in extraordinary events. Among the lowest class of Chinese, life is one long attempt to mollify, appease and make contented the hosts of "kuei", retributions is firmly believed and Mrs. Ayscough related the following events which took place, according to her informant, near the West Gate, in the second month of this year. A travelling merchant lost his wife, who left two children, a girl and a boy. He married again and the second wife did not properly care for the children. So, while the merchant was absent, the spirit of the first wife returned, after dark, and entered into the form of the Ya Tou or serving maid, spoke with her own voice, which all the neighbours recognized, reproving the second wife for this neglect of the children. At cock crow she returned to the Yin world. The second evening she possessed the small, who fell to the floor and, speaking with the voice of her late mistress, declared that until the children were properly cared for she would continue to return. The third day the second wife was herself possessed, and the neighbours all heard. After trying various means of getting rid of the spirit, promises were made that the children should be properly clothed, educated and cared for, which promises had been kept. The spirit with anxiety lulled, departed and so far had not been heard from again!

Mrs. Ayscough also told a story of Chao K'uang-yin, founder of the Sung dynasty, and said that in the Chinese mind the fact of communication with the other world was infallible. She proceeded to deal with the other spirits which abound, illustrating the famous fox. She then took her audience on an imaginary journey with a man in his passage through the "yang" (material) world and noticed the precautions he adopted to protect himself and his family from all the evil influences which seemed so ripe. Passing on to the customs of the countryside, Mrs. Ayscough related many interesting facts, and then spoke of the universal custom of consultation with soothsayers. Superstitions connected with death and burial were next considered, and the paper ended with a plea for tolerance and sympathy with the Chinese in these matters.

A hearty vote of thanks was accorded to Mrs. Ayscough for her interesting paper, at the close.

In Memory of a French Journalist.

The London and provincial Press has contributed £760 for the benefit of the widow and family of M. Serge Bassot, correspondent of the Petit Parisien on the British front, who was killed in June last. A sum of £250 is also granted from the Civil List.

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